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P 121830Z JUN 06  
FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9551  
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 5909  
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 3222  
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 7073  
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 4326  
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1617  
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 1609  
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 3835  
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 4251  
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 8798  
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UNCLAS LA PAZ 001587

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SENSITIVE  
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E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [BL](#)  
SUBJECT: LAND CONFLICT IN ORURO

REF: LA PAZ 1517

¶1. (U) The GOB displaced 7,000 squatters from privately-owned lands in the Department of Oruro on June 9; one off-duty police officer was killed in the confrontation. Members of an organization dubbed the "Roofless Movement" (similar to the Landless Movement) had been living in tents on private property for weeks and had instituted a hunger strike calling for the resignation of MAS officials who had failed to respond to their demands, including Minister of Government Alicia Munoz (who is from Oruro) and Governor Alberto Aguilar. President Morales' June 3 land decrees (see reftel) emboldened the squatters in their desire to stake out landholdings. On June 9, the confrontation escalated when GOB police and military forces attempted to evict the squatters with tear gas. Although the circumstances are unclear, one of the squatters, off-duty police officer Santiago Orocando Arevillca, was shot and killed. Twelve to fifteen others were injured.

¶2. (SBU) Comment: The GOB has stated that it will not negotiate application of the law, and has said squatters cannot take over productive lands. On its face, the GOB's intervention in Oruro seems to support the rule of law. However, many are concerned about the law's uneven application and blame the GOB for opening the proverbial Pandora's box with its recent land decrees. It remains to be seen whether the GOB will continue to use a heavy hand in the increasing number of land conflicts throughout Bolivia and whether poor, rural Bolivians will have the patience to wait for the Constituent Assembly to decide this important issue. End comment.  
GREENLEE